

3 The Issue of Methodology Regarding Inner-Biblical and Inter-Biblical Interpretation: Rhetorical Criticism

In our last chapter, we delineated discourse analysis (text-linguistics) as one of the two methodological approaches we will apply in this project. In this chapter, we will examine our second methodological approach, rhetorical criticism, under the rubric of literary analysis.

Literary analysis⁸³ has a protracted history that encompasses a variety of methodologies that stretch beyond the scope of this project. While we refer to scholarly works that treat and discuss these subjects,⁸⁴ our course of action is to focus on one of the methodologies and consider how it can be applied to our study.

Literary analysis includes the following methodologies: source, tradition-historical, form, redaction, canonical, and rhetorical criticism.⁸⁵ Regardless of the methodologies chosen, the aim of applying literary criticism to biblical studies – to borrow John Barton’s term – is for the “elucidation” of the biblical texts.⁸⁶ After reviewing all the critical methods, we have settled on rhetorical criticism. The reasons why we have chosen rhetorical criticism above other methods of literary analysis serve as the subject of our next section.

83 Traditionally, literary criticism is also known as source criticism. It should be noted that we are using literary analysis and literary criticism synonymously, putting textual, form, source, rhetorical, and canonical criticism under literary analysis. See T. K. Beal, K. A. Keefer, and T. Linafelt, “Literary Theory, Literary Criticism, and the Bible,” in *DBI* 2: 79. Richard Coggins, “Keeping Up with Recent Studies X: The Literary Approach to the Bible,” *ExpTim* 96 (1984): 9-14.

84 A most helpful survey of literary analysis is done by Temper Longman III, “Literary Approaches to Old Testament Study,” in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, ed. David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1999), 97-115. Contained within is a survey of the contemporary history of literary analysis. Compare Longman, “Literary Approaches and Interpretation,” in *NIDOTTE*, 1: 103-24. This article supplies both a historical survey and a description of the literary conventions. For a historical survey of literary criticism up to 1989, read Paul R. House, “The Rise and Current Status of Literary Criticism of the Old Testament,” in *Beyond Form Criticism: Essays in Old Testament Literary Criticism*, ed. Paul House (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 3-22.

85 For an overview and concise survey of literary analysis, consult Stephen R. Haynes and Steven L. McKenzie, eds., *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1993).

86 John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study*, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1996), 10.

3.1 Methodology: Rhetorical Criticism

Our discussion of this topic is organized as follows. After a brief introductory remark, we will address the methodological diversity of rhetorical criticism, followed by a consideration of the problems bound to occur when applying rhetorical criticism to biblical studies. After addressing these inevitable issues, we will adjust and make suitable adaptations to the methodological approach used in this project.⁸⁷

Essentially, rhetorical criticism has been welcomed in biblical studies because of its text-oriented nature, and since the 1980s its impact on literary analysis has been

⁸⁷ For a historical description of rhetorical criticism, see Edward P. J. Corbett and Robert J. Connors, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), chap. 6. Note Corbett and Connors write from a non-biblical perspective about the history of rhetoric from ancient times to the present. From a biblical scholarly perspective, consult these works regarding various topics of rhetorical criticism: Burton L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*, Guide to Biblical Scholarship (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990); Dennis L. Stamps, "Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament: Ancient and Modern Evaluations of Argumentation," in *Approaches to New Testament Study*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and David Tombs, JSNTSup 120 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 129-69; Dale Patrick and Allen Scult, *Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation*, JSOTSup 82, Bible and Literature Series 26 (Sheffield: Almond, 1990); W. M. W. Roth, "Rhetorical Criticism, Hebrew Bible, in *DBI* 2: 396-99; David Hester Amador, *Academic Constraints in Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction to a Rhetoric of Power*, JSNTSup 174 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); Wilhelm Wuellner, "Biblical Exegesis in the Light of the History and Historicity of Rhetoric and the Nature of the Rhetoric of Religion," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht, JSNTSup 90 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 492-513; C. Clifton Black, "Keeping Up with Recent Studies XVI: Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation," *ExpTim* 100 (1989): 252-58 and Dennis L. Stamps, "Rhetorical and Narratological Criticism," in *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 219-39. Among all the biblical scholars, the work of James Muilenburg is considered pivotal in revitalizing rhetorical criticism in biblical studies. See his "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88 (1969): 1-18. For Muilenburg, one should distinguish rhetoric from rhetorical criticism, the former being an enterprise, the latter being methodology (*ibid.*, 8). Publications of rhetorical criticism in biblical studies are abundant; for a survey or review of these publications, please consult Duane F. Watson and Alan J. Hauser, *Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: A Comprehensive Bibliography with Notes on History and Method*, Bible Interpretation Series 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1994). We update further by adding later works in the OT: Charles C. Shaw, *The Speeches of Micah: A Rhetorical-Historical Analysis*, JSOTSup 145 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), Timothy A. Lenchak, "Choose Life!": A Rhetorical-Critical Investigation of Deuteronomy 28,69-30,20, *AnBib* 129 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993), Phyllis Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method and the Book of Jonah* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), Lyle Eslinger, *House of God or House of David: The Rhetoric of 2 Samuel 7*, JSOTSup 164 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), Nicolai Winther-Nielsen, *A Functional Discourse Grammar of Joshua: A Computer-Assisted Rhetorical Structure Analysis*, ConB OT Series 40 (Stockholm, Sweden: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1995), Robert H. O'Connell, *Rhetorical of the Book of Judges*, VTSup 63 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1996), Thomas Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel*, VTSup 76 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1999).

especially prolific.⁸⁸ Evidence of this boom of publications is the literary and poetics studies by Alter and Sternberg.⁸⁹ The focus of these studies is “text-centered” for the work primarily involves analyzing the text itself. Clearly rhetorical criticism effectively complements this trend.⁹⁰

Besides its text-oriented nature, the goal of rhetorical criticism resembles the goal of religion, that is, both seek to persuade people to believe in certain things advocated by the rhetorician or religious leader. It is correct when David Howard remarks that “all religious writing may be seen as ‘rhetorical’ in the sense that it attempts to change behavior. In that sense, the entire Bible is rhetorical.”⁹¹ Howard continues to encourage biblical rhetorical critics to study the biblical text, and to pay attention to the rhetorical arguments presented by the biblical writers in the text.⁹² H. J. Bernard Combrink seems to be thinking along similar lines to Howard when he argues for reading a text both for its “information” and for its “transformation.”⁹³ While the text’s information undergirds the text’s transformation, the latter belongs to the realm of spirituality. Since rhetoric and religion are inseparable, the application of rhetoric (rhetorical criticism) to the study of the Bible is both appropriate and inevitable.

3.1.1 Rhetorical Criticism: Methodological Diversity

Rhetorical criticism encompasses a variety of models. At the risk of simplicity, rhetorical criticism consists of ancient (or classical) rhetoric, new rhetoric, and a mixture of both; therefore, rhetorical criticism remains fluid in its development. A brief and tentative description of each of these models is useful.

⁸⁸ Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 76.

⁸⁹ See Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), and his *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985) and Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1985).

⁹⁰ G. Tucker “Foreword” in Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*, viii.

⁹¹ See David M. Howard, Jr., “Rhetorical Criticism in Old Testament Studies,” *BBR* 4 (1994): 103. Cf. Jan Lambrecht, “Rhetorical Criticism and the New Testament,” *Bijdragen: Tijdschrift voor Filosofie en Theologie* 50 (1989): 239-53.

⁹² Howard, “Rhetorical Criticism,” 103.

⁹³ H. J. Bernard Combrink, “The Rhetoric of Sacred Scripture,” in *Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology: Essays from the 1994 Pretoria Conference*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht, JSNTSup 131 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 103.

Ancient rhetoric has roots reaching back to Aristotle,⁹⁴ and has been subsequently nourished, enriched, and solidified by others.⁹⁵ Surveying these classical works briefly, rhetoric's five parts soon become apparent: invention; arrangement; style; memory; and delivery.⁹⁶ For our purposes, invention, arrangement, and style merit closer attention.⁹⁷ Invention refers to either the author's uninvented proof (called external) or invented proof (called internal or artistic). Speaking to the artistic, Aristotle argues for *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* as three modes of proof corresponding to our understanding as *ethical*, *emotional*, and *logical* modes of proof. Arrangement concerns itself with rhetorical effectiveness in speech composition, which translates into structuring the parts to fit the unified whole. Style, among the three discussed here, is slightly harder to pinpoint. Looked at one way, it is tied to grammatical correctness; the clarity of the thought being expressed; the ornamentation achieved by using certain devices for emphasis; and propriety in the sense of matching subjects with appropriate words.⁹⁸ What interests us, as far as our project is concerned, is the "theory of style" divided into two parts: lexis (diction), that is, the choice or use of words, and synthesis (study of composition), that is, the way the words are put together to form phrases and sentences.⁹⁹ We will return to these two components of the theory of style as we progress to the topic of the adaptation of rhetorical criticism to our study. It must be noted that ancient rhetoric has not occupied the center stage since the 1970s because that was when a revised rhetoric was proposed, marking the arrival of a new rhetoric.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*.

⁹⁵ Cicero, *De Oratore* and Quintilian *Institutio Oratoria*. For an assessment of these ancient rhetoricians, see George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), chaps. 1 and 5. Cf. his *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 12-13.

⁹⁶ For a detailed exposition of these five "canons," as labeled by Corbett and Connors, see their *Classical Rhetoric*, 17-23. Cf. Josef Martin, *Antik Rhetorik: Technik und Methode* (München: C. H. Beck'sche, 1974) and Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, with a foreword by George Kennedy, trans. Matthew Bliss, Annemiek Jansen and David Orton, ed. David Orton and R. Dean Anderson (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

⁹⁷ Few scholars pay attention to the last two items simply because they focus more on the oral aspect or the presentation of a writing. Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 14.

⁹⁸ Kennedy, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 25.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

¹⁰⁰ How do we account for the rise of the new rhetoric in literary studies? First, in a broader scope, the new rhetoric can be understood as a "reaction to logical empiricism and other forms of purely rationalistic philosophy" (see Lenchak, *Rhetorical-Critical Investigation*, 50). Second, the application of classical rhetoric to literature tends to rely too heavily on stylistic devices at the cost of neglecting the argumentation aspect of rhetoric (*ibid.*, 51).

The stress placed on the argumentation aspect of rhetoric prompted scholars like Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca¹⁰¹ to produce works that eventually caused a paradigm shift of the rhetorical study of Scripture. The new rhetoric has not totally departed from ancient rhetoric; however, what the new rhetoric has done is to modify or elevate the first two parts of ancient rhetoric – invention and arrangement – within the argumentation, while subordinating style and eliminating the last two aspects, memory and delivery.¹⁰² Since on both sides of the Atlantic there are other schools of the new rhetoric, our provided description of the new rhetoric is incomplete, and only serves as a representative model.¹⁰³

Once the new rhetoric established itself in scholarly studies, one detects a hybrid of the old and the new in some scholars' approach to literature. Hester, for example, proposes "a new model" to balance the interest of both context and text.¹⁰⁴ That is, he seeks to balance current interest in social interaction and the pragmatic dimension of argumentation with the traditional focus of rhetoric found in the stylistic devices.¹⁰⁵ It appears that he wants to approach the text by studying the social dimension according to the new rhetoric, while employing the format-stylistic devices of the old.¹⁰⁶

3.2 Issues of Rhetorical Criticism in Biblical Studies

When applied to biblical study, rhetorical criticism produces results, but encounters several fundamental problems as well. In the following section, we will deal first with the NT followed by the OT, and while not exhaustive, this treatment is illustrative. Furthermore, our treatment will pave the way for the needed modification of the rhetorical critical method set forward in our final analysis.

First, we will address the problems encountered when applying rhetorical criticism to NT studies. NT scholars debate over the degree of influence the Greco-Roman culture in general and Greek rhetoric in particular had upon the NT writers.

101 Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969). See Black, "Recent Studies," 256, on how Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, formulate a theoretical model for the new rhetoric. Cf. Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 55-56.

102 Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 56. For the argumentative emphasis in the new rhetoric, see C. Clifton Black, "Rhetorical Criticism," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel Green (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995), 271-72.

103 See Wilhelm Wuellner, "Rhetorical Criticism and Its Theory in Culture-Critical Perspective: The Narrative Rhetoric of John 11," in *Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament*, ed. P. J. Hartin and J. H. Petzer (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 171-85, on the theory and method of the new rhetoric.

104 James Hester, "Re-discovering and Re-inventing Rhetoric," *Scriptura* 50 (1994): 19.

105 *Ibid.*, 6.

106 See other works of a hybridized form of rhetorical criticism in Black, "Recent Studies," 256.

For example, Ruth Majercik is a scholar who will not hesitate to affirm the Hellenistic rhetorical influence upon the NT.¹⁰⁷ On the contrary, scholars like Jeffrey Weima deny its influence, or ones like Stamps express reservations primarily because, in the case of the Pauline epistles, the handbook of the letter genre was absent from ancient rhetoric handbooks until much later.¹⁰⁸

In a similar vein, we might question to what degree the Jewish oratory traditions influenced these biblical writers. Kennedy is one scholar who strongly affirms the Greek influence on the NT and also argues for the Jewish oratory traditions playing a certain role in the rhetoric of the NT. Regrettably, in his two seminal works he fails to delineate his argument for the Jewish oratory influence on NT writings.¹⁰⁹

There is no easy way to determine to what extent the Jewish oratory tradition and Greek rhetoric influenced the NT. In light of these inconclusive results, it might be tempting to abuse the application of rhetorical criticism to biblical studies. To safeguard against this possibility, modification of rhetorical criticism is to be expected in NT studies.

Second, we will address the problems encountered when applying rhetorical criticism to OT Studies. Since the origin of rhetorical criticism, by and large, traces back to the Greek rhetoric of the fifth century B.C., the question remains: how could we apply rhetorical criticism to writing (OT) that mostly predates it? A related question arises: is the Greek category of rhetoric applicable to the study of the rhetoric of the Hebrew Bible? One can certainly argue that because all languages share some universal features and all writings, in a certain sense, are rhetorical in purpose, such analysis should not be viewed as superimposing the Greek category on the Hebrew use of language.¹¹⁰ Yet the nature of the Hebrew language, and thereby its writings,

107 Ruth Majercik, "Rhetoric and Oratory in the Greco-Roman World," *ABD* 5: 711.

108 Jeffrey A. Weima, "What Does Aristotle Have to Do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism," *Calvin Theological Journal* 32 (1997): 458-68. Stamps, "Rhetorical and Narratological Criticism," 233. Cf. his "Ancient and Modern Evaluations," 141-48. See Carl Joachim Classen, *Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament*, WUNT 128 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000). This book contains revisions and updates of his previously published articles. We should also note the NT scholarship in their rhetorical studies on epistolary form and narratology. NT scholarship is more ahead in their studies on the former than the latter. Porter, "Introduction: The Heidelberg Papers in Perspective," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays*, 22; see Porter's assessment on the rhetoric in Pauline letters in his "The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature," 100-122 in the same volume.

109 Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 143. Cf. his *Rhetorical Criticism*, 10-11. In the second reference, he argues that Hebrew rhetoric may have already existed in the OT, but since there is no evidence of Jewish articulation of Hebrew rhetoric in the pre-Christian era, we resort to the Greek concepts and terms to describe it.

110 A similar argument is made by Rodney K. Duke, *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler: A Rhetorical Analysis*, JSOTSup 88 (Sheffield: Almond, 1990), 38.

should not be discounted when ancient Greek rhetoric is applied.¹¹¹ In other words, a substantial modification of the rhetorical category is unavoidable. Others, like Eslinger, propose that the best approach to understanding OT rhetoric is by comparison with ANE literature, though one slight problem is evident. Thus far no one has done any research on it.¹¹² Basically that leaves us starting at ground zero if we want rhetorical criticism indigenous to the Hebrew Bible.¹¹³ The above discussion seems to point to an impasse but other scholars have found reasons to justify the use of rhetorical criticism (not necessarily based on Greek rhetoric) in OT studies.

The nature of OT writing provides a framework for scholars to apply the rhetorical critical approach to the study of Scripture. First, biblical narrative is the most prominent genre in the OT, and Patrick and Scult proceed to argue that embedded in the biblical narrative is rhetoric.¹¹⁴ Therefore, biblical narrative is by nature rhetorical, and it comes as no surprise that Stamps' article is entitled "Rhetorical and Narratological Criticism."¹¹⁵ In it, he shows that the two criticisms are connected in certain ways and share some foundational issues, such as interest in the final text of the Scripture, the mode and effect of a text's arrangement, and the coherence of a text.

Second, the other genre of the OT writing – the prophecies – also warrants the use of rhetorical criticism. Shaw, who follows Fox's contention, argues that the OT prophets are just like political orators in ancient Greece, and thus their prophecies are rhetorical.¹¹⁶ When an OT prophet speaks, his intention is to persuade with two main themes: to denounce sin and to predict a coming calamity as God's discipline of an unrepentant people,¹¹⁷ suggesting that the main concern of OT prophetic rhetoric is theodicy.¹¹⁸ Theodicy demands a speech or a text that is rhetorically composed in order to persuade and convict God's people.

What follows next is an assessment of the application of rhetorical criticism to biblical studies. In several places, we have stressed the need to modify the features of rhetorical criticism to suit the nature of the biblical writings. Since the OT contains mainly narrative and poetic genres, and the NT contains mainly narrative and

¹¹¹ Lenchak, *Rhetorical-Critical Investigation*, 72-74.

¹¹² Eslinger, *House of God*, 6. Cf. similar point made by Hauser, "Notes on History and Method," in *Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible*, 4.

¹¹³ T. Muraoka, "Foreword," in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. L. J. de Regt, J. de Waard, and J. P. Fokkelman (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1996), viii.

¹¹⁴ Patrick and Scult, *Biblical Interpretation*, 31.

¹¹⁵ Stamps, "Rhetorical and Narratological Criticism," 219-21.

¹¹⁶ Shaw, *Speeches of Micah*, 20-21. See Michael V. Fox, "The Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of the Bones," *HUCA* 51 (1980): 1-15.

¹¹⁷ John Barton, "History and Rhetoric in the Prophets," in *The Bible as Rhetoric: Studies in Biblical Persuasion and Credibility*, ed. Martin Warner (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 51.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

epistolary genres, the application of rhetorical criticism to both Testaments calls for sensitivity to their distinct features. For example, Howard points out that the classical tradition of rhetoric as advocated by Kennedy is frequently applied to NT studies probably because of the suasive nature of the epistolary genre.¹¹⁹ Not all biblical literature is subjected to this kind of analysis, however. Some aspects of biblical literature “either resist rhetorical analysis or else require the enrichment of its procedures and classifications.”¹²⁰ For example, the apocalyptic literature (such as Revelation) could pose a challenge to the current features of rhetorical criticism, which do not take into account the distinctive characteristics – symbolism and signs – of apocalyptic literature. To summarize, a sensitive rhetorical analysis takes into account the nature of the biblical materials being examined, a crucial point we will apply to our proposed study of the three Melchizedek passages.

3.3 An Adaptation of Rhetorical Criticism in Our Study

As argued in the above section, we need acute perception of the nature of the three Melchizedek texts when applying rhetorical criticism, bearing in mind that each text requires certain adaptations of the features of rhetorical criticism. In our case, we are dealing with three different genres of biblical literature: narrative, poetic and epistolary. Therefore, in our application of rhetorical criticism, we will make certain modifications of rhetorical procedures to each text as required. We propose two main adaptations: first, we will delete the first, fourth and fifth canons of classical rhetoric, that is, invention, memory, and delivery; and second, we will look carefully at the argumentation aspect of each text that the new rhetoric significantly emphasizes.

Overall, however, we will apply the following major steps of rhetorical procedure when analyzing our texts. These will include determining the rhetorical unit; a step, according to Lenchak, basically belongs to the second canon of classical rhetoric.¹²¹ Among the three texts, the unit’s boundary of Psalm 110 is the easiest to identify. A rhetorical analysis of Genesis 14, however, is needed in order to determine its boundary. For Hebrews, our study – in chapters ten and eleven – will show that the rhetorical unit is a large block of materials, from Hebrews 1 to 7.

Next we will examine the arrangement; our main concern here is how a text is rhetorically structured. Each part of the text will contribute as a whole to the rhetorical effect of the unit, and this step involves an examination of “the patterns of a text.

119 Howard, “Rhetorical Criticism,” 101.

120 Martin Warner, “Introduction,” in *The Bible as Rhetoric*, 8.

121 Lenchak, *Rhetorical-Critical Investigation*, 171.

Such patterns may include the techniques of alternation, chiasm, inclusion, keywords, motifs and symmetry.”¹²²

Lastly, we will investigate the style, for the main concern here is how all three texts use words or patterns of words to achieve the rhetorical effect. The rhetorical use of words/pattern of words is characteristic of the theory of style,¹²³ a style we have alluded to earlier in this chapter. At this point, the two methodologies used by this project – discourse analysis and rhetorical criticism – intersect. The syntagmatic and paradigmatic use of a word, a text-linguistic concern,¹²⁴ and the rhetorical use of a word, a rhetoric concern, traverse each other. At this junction we end our discussion of the two methodologies, and turn our attention to the possibility of combining the two.

3.4 Concluding Remarks: The Use of Discourse Analysis (Text-Linguistics) and Rhetorical Criticism

It is exciting to see how biblical scholars have recently employed both text-linguistics and rhetorical criticism in their study of the Scriptures, for the combination has yielded significant insights in biblical studies; an example being Bertil Wiklander and his application of rhetorical criticism and text-linguistics to the study Isaiah 2-4.¹²⁵

Apart from the results as illustrated in Wiklander’s work, a fundamental question remains: how do we justify combining these two methodologies to apply to biblical studies? Some scholars have been critical in this regard, and while we do not intend to reiterate their assessments, we will direct our readers to the words themselves, particularly the writings of Porter and Guthrie.¹²⁶ We have reviewed these referenced

¹²² Ibid., 173.

¹²³ Stamps, “Ancient and Modern Evaluations,” 156. Trible, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 102.

¹²⁴ See chapter two.

¹²⁵ Bertil Wiklander, *Prophecy as Literature: A Text-Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to Isaiah 2-4* (Uppsala: CWK Gleerup, 1984). Contrary to many critical studies, Isaiah 2-4 is a coherent unit since the text presents as a persuasive discourse. Examined as a communicative unit, the text’s lexicogrammatical elements are analyzed, along with its syntactic, semantic and pragmatic structure. This type of analysis enlivens the text, or if we dare say, makes it ‘alive.’

¹²⁶ Among these evaluations, read Porter, “Ancient Rhetorical Analysis and Discourse Analysis of the Pauline Corpus,” in *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference*, ed. Porter and Olbricht, JSNTSup 146 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 49-74. Also his “Linguistics and Rhetorical Criticism,” in *Linguistics and the New Testament: Critical Junctures*, ed. Porter and Carson, JSNTSup 168 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 63-92. George H. Guthrie, “Boats in the Bay: Reflections on the Use of Linguistics and Literary Analysis in Biblical Studies,” in *Critical Junctures*, 23-35. Some German works on the relationship of rhetoric and text-linguistics are pointed out by David Hellholm, “*Amplificatio* in the Macro-Structure of Romans,” in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays*, 123, 147, and 149.

works and now we offer our observation as follows: scholars who scrutinize the combined use of rhetoric and linguistics tend to look for or overly stress the differences exhibited between both methods, and of course, differences abound. For example, classical rhetoric is an ancient paradigm, while text-linguistics is a contemporary one. Suffice it to say, differences in assumption and methodological procedure discourage their combined usage. What we need to stress, however, is the evident similarity in the object of investigation, and the shared purpose and function in analyzing literature. Both methodologies treat the biblical text as final text; it is the object of their examination. Furthermore, both methods look at texts in relation to their functions from the argumentative-communicative perspective, and examine how the parts can contribute to the whole in terms of meaning and structure. For these significant reasons, it is worthwhile for us to attempt combining the two methods for the study of our texts.

3.5 The Limitations of Our Study

Having justified our intent to combine the two methodologies, we will now turn to three clearly anticipated limitations in this project: the use of Qumran and intertestamental literature; selectivity in analyzing texts; and the inconclusive nature of dating biblical texts in inner- and inter-biblical interpretation. With the primary objective of this study focusing on the three biblical texts, the Qumran and intertestamental materials, though not unrelated to our study, would consign into a secondary role.

3.5.1 Selectivity in Analyzing Texts

While we will spend most of our energy studying Genesis 14, Psalm 110 and Heb 5:1-7:28, the cotexts of these passages will also be considered. Cotexts of Genesis 14 include Genesis 12-13, 15, 17 and 22. The blessing idea in Genesis 12 will bring us to other passages in the Pentateuch, for instance, Genesis 49 and Numbers 23-24. Similarly, Psalm 110 has its own cotexts. We propose that a review of the structure of the Psalter (Book I-V), with special references to certain Psalms like 2, 72, 89 and 132, is necessary;¹²⁷ and in the NT, Hebrews 5-7 will be investigated with special reference to the first seven chapters of the book for its background value.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ In the course of our study in this project, we will show the reasons why we include these proposed texts.

¹²⁸ We will deal with three major texts and their cotexts, while we leave some elements such as the Qumran and intertestamental literature about Melchizedek, which are related to our topic, to other scholarly studies. Such studies in extra-biblical literature of Melchizedek are abundant. For example, for 11QMelch, see Gareth Cockerill, "Melchizedek or 'King of Righteousness'," *EvQ* 63 (1991): 115-20; Joseph Fitzmyer, "Further Light on Melchizedek from Qumran Cave 11," *JBL* 86 (1967): 25-41.

3.5.2 Dating of the Texts

One of the biggest challenge in the study of inner- and inter-biblical interpretation is dating biblical texts. When a later biblical writer quotes an early biblical source, we immediately encounter the problem of dating biblical texts. The difficulty of dating a biblical text is enormous.¹²⁹ To avoid an inconclusive result of dating biblical texts, we will make certain assumptions instead. In our case, when we say that the writer of Psalm 110 read and interpreted Genesis 14 (perhaps with the cotext of Genesis 14 in mind), we assume that the Pentateuch was available to him.

Notwithstanding the above limitations, in our next chapter, the text of Genesis 14 will be the focus of our investigation through rhetorical and discourse analysis.

129 Here we want to demonstrate the difficulty and complexity of dating a biblical text. Despite a seemingly simple text as Genesis 14, scholars have failed to reach a consensus concerning its dating. Gunkel, the leading form critic of our age, thinks Genesis 14 belongs to none of the documentary sources, J or E (Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark Biddle, with a foreword by Ernest Nicholson [Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997], 282. Note: the English translation is based on the ninth printing of the third edition of Gunkel's German work, published in 1977 and 1910 respectively). Without the certainty of its 'documentary sources,' how can scholars pin down the date of Genesis 14? We are aware that the dating of Genesis 14 should be discussed in two parts: Gen 14:18-20 and the rest of chapter 14. John Gammie begins his article with this statement: "There is virtually unanimous opinion among scholars that vv. 18-20 were not originally of a piece with the rest of Genesis 14." See his "Loci of Melchizedek Tradition of Genesis 14:18-20," *JBL* 90 (1971): 385. We put both together to simplify our discussion. In our chapter 4, we will review the debate of Gen 14:18-20 as a late insertion. The dating of Genesis 14 can be as early as the second millennium B.C. and as late as the Maccabean period (see Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36: A Commentary*, trans. John Scullion [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985], 192). If dating a single piece of text can be so problematic, it is not hard to imagine the complexity of the comparative dating of two biblical texts, namely, Genesis 14 and Psalm 110. This example also illustrates how dating a biblical text is a frustrating experience that at best is inconclusive and at worst is fruitless. Furthermore, the claim that the writer of Psalm 110 has made use of Genesis 14 or vice versa may be unsupportable in light of this wide range of possible dates. Rather than speculate on the dating of Genesis 14 (and other texts), we will simply assume Genesis 14 precedes Psalm 110. Thus we will make certain assumptions and leave the dating for future study.